

BRAZOS ASSOCIATION NEWS

Creative Spirit, the United Church of Christ new church start, had its inaugural worship service on Saturday evening, December 22. The worship service was led by Pastor Dr. Carla Cheatham at the church's current location at 1700 S. Lamar in Austin. Creative Spirit is a congregation Carla is starting "from scratch" without a core initial group, with the aim of inviting in people from the south Austin area (and all others) who are looking for a creative, welcoming, non-traditional worship community. The opening worship attracted interested folk from the community as well as supporters from Austin area churches, including a group from Church of the Savior. We rejoice in the mix of people and the worship on that day: it's a great risk to start as Carla has without having a firm core group. The service included music led by Sean Michael Showalter and Tony Velasco, as well as movement led by a local Interplay leader. (Interplay is a group that focuses on creativity and Spirit.) The next worship, a Spirit Slam including a poetry slam, will be on Saturday, January 26th at 5:30 pm. For the time being, the worship services are monthly toward the end of the month on Saturdays at 5:00 pm. Carla is exploring options for gathering more frequently, and we'll let people know as that happens. Let's keep Carla and this new movement of the Holy Spirit in our prayers. We invite you to have a look at Carla's web blog at <http://creativespiritucc.wordpress.com/> and at the church's web site at www.creativespiritucc.info/. Of course, we invite you to Creative Spirit's worship services, too!

As I noted last month, our Association is encouraging our 13-18 year old youth (with flexibility to include 12 year olds and 19 year olds mature enough to help the adult leaders) to attend the UCC National Youth Event next summer at the University of Tennessee campus in Knoxville on July 24-28, 2008. A caravan or bus trip to Knoxville, including a stop to do a short work camp (most likely in the New Orleans area) for youth from our conference is currently in the planning stages. Youth and chaperones would have the option of going on the mission trip, joining the group afterward for the rest of the trip, or meeting in Knoxville. Laurie Doyal-Lampman from the South Texas Association is the conference coordinator for this effort. The Brazos Association has been setting aside money for several years to help fund participants, and we need to hear from our churches on or before March 1 with a list of youth and chaperones who want to go. We hope to be able to fund the entire registration fee of \$345 for those who go from our Association (with participants and churches paying for travel expenses), but we have to have a firm number to see what works with our budget before we can determine the Association scholarship contribution. Let us know who wants to participate by contacting me, Liz Nash, at liznash@austin.rr.com or at (512) 231-0045.